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On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "I Was a Teen-age Dwarf", "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis", etc.)

LANGUAGE MADE SIMPLE: NO. 1

In this day of swift international communications, like radio, television, and the raft, it becomes more and more important to be solidly grounded in foreign languages. Accordingly, I have asked the makers of Philip Morris whether I might not occasionally forego levity in this column and instead use it for a lesson in language.

"Of course, silly!" chuckled the makers of Philip Morris, tousling my yellow locks. Oh, grand men they are, just as full of natural goodness as the cigarettes they make, just as clean and fresh, just as friendly, just as agreeable to have along in all times and climes and places. "Of course, fond boy," laughed the makers and tossed me up and down in a blanket until, giddy with giggling, I bade them desist, and then we all had basins of farina and smoked Philip Morrises and sang songs until the campfire had turned to embers.

For our first lesson in language we will take up French. We will approach French in the modern manner—ignoring the tedious rules of grammar and concentrating instead on idiom. After all, when we go to France, what does it matter if we can parse and conjugate? What matters is that we should be able to speak *idiomatic conversational* French.

So, for the first exercise, translate the following real, true-to-life dialogue between two real, true-to-life Frenchmen named Claude (pronounced *Clohd*) and Pierre (also pronounced *Clohd*).

CLAUDE: Good morning, sir. Can you direct me to the nearest monk?

PIERRE: I have regret, but I am a stranger here myself.

CLAUDE: Is it that you come from the France?

PIERRE: You have right.

CLAUDE: I also. Come, let us mount the airplane and return ourselves to the France.

PIERRE: We must defend from smoking until the airplane elevates itself.

CLAUDE: Ah, now it has elevated itself. Will you have a Philippe Maurice?

PIERRE: Merey.

CLAUDE: How many years has the small gray cat of the sick admiral?

PIERRE: She has four years, but the tall brown dog of the short blacksmith has only three.

CLAUDE: In the garden of my aunt it makes warm in the summer and cold in the winter.

PIERRE: What a coincidence! In the garden of *my* aunt too!

CLAUDE: Ah, we are landing. Regard how the airplane depresses itself.

PIERRE: What shall you do in the France?

CLAUDE: I shall make a promenade and see various sights of cultural significance, like the Louvre, the Tomb of Napoleon, and the Eiffel Tower . . . What shall you do?

PIERRE: I shall try to pick up the stewardess.

CLAUDE: Long live the France!

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Et vive aussi les Marlboros et les Alpines, les cigarettes très bonnes, très agréables, très magnifiques, et les sponsors de cette column-là.

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